

in mind our solemn responsibility to support our national defense. That is our No. 1 priority. All of our other freedoms flow from our ability to protect and defend the American people.

Whether our servicemembers are guarding against threats from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, or terrorist groups, they need the backing of a strong National Defense Authorization Act to succeed.

I appreciate the bipartisan work of the Armed Services Committee, chaired by Chairman REED and Ranking Member INHOFE, and appreciate their hard work in getting this bill ready for our consideration. The committee, during its markup, adopted 143 bipartisan amendments and reported out the final bill by a vote of 23 to 3. You don't get much more bipartisan than that around here.

This legislation has been waiting in the wings for months, and I am glad we can finally begin consideration of this critical legislation this week.

I hope we can continue the legacy of bipartisanship that guides this legislation through the Senate. This debate should be about how to defend our national security, how to deter tyrants and bullies from around the world, and guarantee the blessings of liberty to all democracies—those that share our values.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the Kanter nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jonathan Kanter, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided.

The Senator from Connecticut.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I will admit that I have some level of confusion when I listen to my Republican colleagues come to the floor and register their complaints when matched against the actual policy positions that my Republican colleagues hold. And I want to present two examples of my confusion this morning.

First, I have heard many of my Republican colleagues come to the floor of the Senate and talk about their concern about price increases in the economy today—and then register votes against the measures that would help families afford things.

Many of my Senate Republican colleagues voted for the bipartisan infrastructure, but more voted against it. In the House of Representatives, there is discussion of purging from the Republican Party any members of the House Republican conference that voted for the infrastructure; notwithstanding the fact that in that bill is funding

that will have a deflationary impact on the economy: money for ports, money for infrastructure, money to be able to move goods and people more quickly across this country.

The Build Back Better agenda—the bill that is going to move before the House and the Senate this month with no Republican support—is all about reducing costs for average, regular Americans: reducing the cost of healthcare, reducing the cost of energy, reducing the cost of childcare.

Childcare expenses are driving American families crazy today—absolutely crazy. The Build Back Better Act will reduce the cost of childcare by 10 to \$15,000 for families in my State.

Republicans oppose the Build Back Better Act because it increases some taxes on billionaires and millionaires. It asks every corporation to pay a minimum amount of tax so that companies, like Amazon and Google, don't get away with paying nothing or next to nothing in tax.

The reason why so many Republicans oppose the Build Back Better agenda is because it is about transferring economic power from the haves—from the economic elites to folks who have been getting the short end of the stick, who have been getting fleeced by this economy.

When Republicans had the chance to cut costs, they did it only for billionaires and millionaires. Eighty percent of the Republican tax cut went to the richest 1 or 2 percent of the economy.

When Democrats have control of the Senate, we deliver tax cuts for the middle class and for the poor. We deliver cost reductions for average American families.

Wages are going up higher than the rate of personal consumption inflation. Right? Personal consumption inflation is just under 5 percent. Wages in the last 12 months have gone up by over 5 percent.

People are making more money. Part of the consequence of people making more money is that some costs go up. But when Republicans were in charge of the White House and the Congress, we just were, largely, flat. Wages are finally going up. People are making more money.

And we are going to have legislation on the floor of the Senate that dramatically cuts costs for average American families, and that legislation likely will get not a single Republican vote.

Republicans' priorities, historically, have been to deliver benefits to the wealthy, to the elites, to their corporate friends. And so when faced with a very different agenda—an agenda that is all about cost reduction, tax cuts for average families, for families making \$30,000 a year, for plumbers, for teachers, for factory workers, for janitors—not a single Republican vote.

So therein lies my confusion that I hear a lot of my Republican colleagues—Republican colleagues that I like, that I respect—come to the floor

and complain about costs and then refuse to deliver a single vote for the most significant legislation to reduce costs for families that this body has considered during my time in the Senate.

Here is my second reason for confusion. Now, encounters with migrants without documentation has come down at the border 3 months in a row—pretty dramatic reduction, in fact, when it comes to unaccompanied minors and families. That is because this President's policies are working.

That is probably the reason you don't hear as many Republicans coming down to the floor talking about the surge at the border. But Republicans have been down here consistently for months talking about the crisis they described at the border.

And so my confusion here is connected to their avowed concern about the surge at the border and then their decision to oppose a Homeland Security budget that would help us address those escalating numbers at the border.

Right now, Senate Republicans are refusing to negotiate with Democrats on a budget for 2021 and 2022. That is what is going on right now. Historically, we always had differences when it comes to our priorities in the budget, but we always sat down and negotiated. Right now, Senate Republicans are boycotting discussions over a budget. And one of the theories is that many Republicans would like to see a continuing resolution—the Trump spending levels continued for the rest of 2021, 2022.

Let me tell you what the impact of that would be when it comes to our operations at the border. I want to explain this because I have the honor to chair the Appropriations Subcommittee overseeing the Department of Homeland Security, and we, just a few weeks ago, introduced a budget for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2022. But if this budget or a version of it negotiated with Republicans doesn't pass, the result is catastrophe at the border.

This budget includes \$178 million for medicine and medical contracts for unaccompanied children that arrive at our border—desperately needed medical care for all of these children and families that are arriving at the border. None of it would be available if we went on a continuing resolution. We would have a health crisis at the border.

There is \$130 million for three permanent multipurpose, multiagency facilities, which will streamline the processes of individuals who present at the border. Right now, we have these megaexpensive, inhumane, soft-sided facilities. That significant investment at the border cannot happen if we have a continuing resolution.